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**TESTIMONY RE: PROPOSED BILL NO. 5898 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES**

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

February 23, 2015, 2014

Good Day, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA) related to **PROPOSED BILL NO. 5898 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES.**

I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association and professor emeritus from Central Connecticut State University.

I speak in **STRONG SUPPORT OF PROPOSED BILL NO. 5898 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES.**

It is recognized by care providers that "Asthma" is the most common chronic disease of childhood, and yet many parents know little about it. In the United States, it is estimated that nearly 5 million youngsters under age 18 have this disease. In 1993 alone, asthma was the reason for almost 200,000 hospital stays and about 340 deaths among persons under age 25.

The numbers of young people and children with asthma is rising. In children ages 5-14 years, the rate of death from asthma almost doubled between 1980 and 1993. The disease is more common in blacks and in city-dwellers than in whites and those who reside in suburban and rural areas. A government survey of young people with asthma (those aged 15-24 years) showed that more blacks than whites died of the disease from 1980 to 1993. Among children aged 0-4 years in 1993, blacks were six times more likely to die from asthma than whites. Among children aged 5-14, blacks were four times more likely than whites to die of the illness. Although asthma can occur in people of any age, even in infants, most children with the illness developed it by about age 5. Asthma seems to be more common in boys than in girls in early childhood. The survey mentioned above showed that in 1993, boys aged 0-4 were 1.4 times more likely than girls the same age to die from asthma. This increased risk remained in boys aged 5-14, who were 1.3 times more likely to die from asthma than girls in that age group. By the teen years, the risk seems to even out between girls and boys. (*Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) Editorial Board*)

Currently the Collection of Data related to this group of affected individuals is fragmented to say the least. Data is collected from providers or from school settings when a child receives a Physical Examination. Allergy data is collected but not routinely reported, as surveys are not mandated. The centrally collected data will serve as a resource for grant applications and applicable research.

This proposed legislation facilitates the collection of Asthma and Allergy Data that is collected by Primary Providers, reported on a regular basis and has the potential to inform grants, research and community education. It will facilitate reporting and make primary providers accountable for reporting in the Community and Medical Homes and will ultimately support the “Team” approach to Primary Community Health.

Therefore, in conclusion the Connecticut Nurses Association recognizes the need for statewide data in order to respond to the prevalence, prevention and intervention needs of children with chronic diseases such as asthma and life threatening allergies.

We would encourage the Department of Health (DPH) to create a systematic and sustainable approach to data collection in the state of CT, so that chronic disease interventions can be approached using a data driven, research based approach.

Pediatric and Primary health care providers and pediatric medical homes are a reliable resource and can provide accurate diagnosis, as they are the diagnosticians for these chronic diseases.

We urge the Committee to support **PROPOSED BILL NO. 5898 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES.** This proposed legislation is proactive and focuses the issue in the correct primary care setting as the State develops the newly legislated approach to care and it fosters the “Team Approach to Primary Community Health.” Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.

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SOURCE: This information should not substitute for seeking responsible, professional medical care. First created 1995; fully updated 1998; most recently updated 2005.

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